

COASTAL CONSERVANCY

Staff Recommendation
January 29, 2015

CLIMATE READY GRANTS

Project No. 14-054-01
Project Manager: Kelly Malinowski and Nadine Peterson

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Authorization to disburse up to \$2,246,289 to 11 nonprofit organizations and public agencies for Climate Ready projects that sequester greenhouse gases or address the effects of climate change on coastal resources.

LOCATION: Various locations along the coast of California and along the San Francisco Bay shoreline (Exhibit 1)

PROGRAM CATEGORY: Climate Change, San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy, Integrated Coastal and Marine Resource Protection

EXHIBITS

- Exhibit 1: [Project Locations](#)
- Exhibit 2: [Climate Ready Grant Round 2 Announcement](#)
- Exhibit 3: [Project Letters](#)
- Exhibit 4: [Final Mitigated Negative Declaration for The Alameda County Voluntary Local Program](#)
- Exhibit 5: [Sonoma Creek Marsh Enhancement Project Mitigated Negative Declaration](#)
- Exhibit 6: [San Luis Obispo County Partners in Restoration Permit Coordination Program Mitigated Negative Declaration](#)

RESOLUTION AND FINDINGS:

Staff recommends that the State Coastal Conservancy adopt the following resolution pursuant to Sections 31000 *et seq.* of the Public Resources Code:

“The State Coastal Conservancy hereby authorizes disbursement of up to two million two hundred fifty five thousand three hundred fifty dollars (\$2,246,289) to 11 nonprofit organizations and public agencies for projects that sequester greenhouse gases or address the effects of climate

change on resources along the coast and within the San Francisco Bay Area, specifically as follows, to the:

- Gold Ridge Resource Conservation District: Two hundred eighteen thousand two hundred seventy dollars (\$218,270) to construct a 1.4 million gallon pond with associated water collecting and pumping infrastructure to eliminate one of the largest summer water diversions from Salmon Creek, a critical coastal watershed for endangered Coho salmon, thereby increasing resiliency in the face of increasingly unreliable rainfall patterns for both the agricultural operation and Salmon Creek organisms;
- Save the Bay: One hundred twenty five thousand nine hundred eighteen dollars (\$125,918) to restore 1.75 acres of transition zone habitat and complete the acreage on an active transition zone restoration site within the Eden Landing Ecological Reserve for a total of 4.25 restored acres, to increase species resilience to climate change impacts like sea level rise;
- Alameda County Resource Conservation District: Two hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$250,000) to implement climate-resilient management strategies, water-related Best Management Practices, and an economically and ecologically sustainable grazing operation on 6,260 acres of land in the Sunol Regional Wilderness in Alameda County to increase landowners' resiliency in the face of current and future drought, as well as other climate change impacts;
- The Watershed Project: Two hundred two thousand two hundred and six dollars (\$202,206) to transform a 2,280 sq. ft. paved median in the center of a parking lot into a bioswale, and create a second bioswale on the 4,380 sq. ft. of existing pavement in the parking lot at Booker T Anderson Jr Park in a low-income community in Richmond, to sequester carbon and reduce the urban heat island effect, in addition to other benefits;
- Trust for Conservation Innovation: Two hundred thirty five thousand six hundred forty seven (\$235,647) to establish demonstration grassland restoration plots in Rush Ranch, Sears Point, and TomKat Ranch, working ranches that have a significant role in conserving coastal resources, and document the restoration technique, inventory and monitor effects, and disseminate and demonstrate results to increase rangeland resilience to climate change impacts;
- National Audubon Society, Inc. : Two hundred thousand dollars (\$200,000) to enhance drainage conditions and construct 10 acres of an innovative climate-smart transition zone and enhance 260 acres of intertidal zone in the fringing tidal marsh along the western bank of Sonoma Creek in Sonoma County to increase regional resilience to climate change impacts like sea level rise;
- Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County: Two hundred thousand dollars (\$200,000) to accelerate the adoption of on-farm conservation practices in the coastal Pajaro Valley to improve climate change resiliency in agriculture while piloting the development of tools that will assist growers in understanding the risks of climate change to their operations;
- Coastal San Luis Resource Conservation District: Three hundred eight thousand three hundred nine dollars (\$308,309) to develop and implement beneficial practices to enhance

rangeland resiliency to climate change while reducing greenhouse gas emissions and sequestering carbon at a ranch scale;

- County of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation: One hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) to create a model park landscape at Eugene A. Obregon park by planting native drought-tolerant trees, creating a demonstration garden, constructing bio-retention basins and vegetated swales, and replacing the approximately 30,000 square foot dark asphalt parking lot with permeable pavement and other improvements in East Los Angeles to sequester greenhouse gases and mitigate the urban heat island effect, in addition to other benefits;
- Trust for Public Land: Two hundred thousand dollars (\$200,000) to pilot a highly replicable demonstration of multi-benefit vegetated infrastructure in an existing alleyway in South Los Angeles to sequester carbon and mitigate the urban heat island effect, in addition to other benefits;
- From Lot to Spot: Two hundred five thousand nine hundred thirty nine dollars (\$205,939) to engage the community to restore 54,000 sq. ft. of the Dominguez Creek by planting a tree canopy and restoring riparian habitat with over 1,500 native plants, utilizing recycled water and restoring the bike path accessible to the disadvantaged communities of Hawthorne, Inglewood and Gardena, and to sequester carbon and mitigate the urban heat island effect, in addition to other benefits;

The authorization is subject to the following condition:

Prior to the disbursement of funds to each grantee, each grantee shall submit for the review and approval of the Conservancy's Executive Officer a final work program, schedule, budget, names of any contractors, a plan for acknowledging Conservancy funding, evidence that all permits and approvals required to implement the project have been obtained, and any other applicable agreements determined necessary for the project by the Conservancy's Executive Officer."

Staff further recommends that the Conservancy adopt the following findings:

"Based on the accompanying staff report and attached exhibits, the State Coastal Conservancy hereby finds that:

1. The proposed authorization is consistent with Division 21 of the Public Resources Code, sections 3100 *et seq.*, regarding project planning and climate change (Chapter 3, sections 31111 and 31113), resource and recreational goals in the San Francisco Bay Area (Chapter 4.5), and integrated coastal and marine resource protection (Chapter 5.5).
2. The proposed project is consistent with the current Conservancy Project Selection Criteria and Guidelines.
3. The nonprofit organization grantees proposed under this authorization exist under section 501(c)(3) of the U.S. Internal Revenue Service Code, and their corporate purposes are consistent with Division 21 of the Public Resources Code.
4. The Conservancy has independently reviewed and considered the information contained in the Final Mitigated Negative Declaration for The Alameda County Voluntary Local Program (Exhibit 4) adopted by the Alameda County Resource Conservation District on August 20,

2012 for the Alameda County Resource Conservation District project and finds no substantial evidence that the project as mitigated will have a significant effect on the environment.

5. The Conservancy has independently reviewed and considered the information contained in the Sonoma Creek Marsh Enhancement Project Mitigated Negative Declaration (Exhibit 5) adopted by the San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board on May 15, 2014 for the National Audubon Society, Inc. project and finds no substantial evidence that the project as mitigated will have a significant effect on the environment.
6. The Conservancy has independently reviewed and considered the information contained in the San Luis Obispo County Partners in Restoration Permit Coordination Program Mitigated Negative Declaration (Exhibit 6 to the staff recommendation) adopted by the Coastal San Luis Resource Conservation District and Upper Salinas-Las Tablas Resource Conservation District on May 14, 2009 for the Coastal San Luis Resource Conservation District project and finds no substantial evidence that the project as mitigated will have a significant effect on the environment.

PROJECT SUMMARY:

This authorization would provide up to \$2,246,289 to 11 different nonprofit organizations and public agencies for projects that address the effects of climate change on resources along the coast and within the San Francisco Bay Area. All of the organizations submitted applications for funding to the Conservancy's Climate Ready program.

The Conservancy solicited applications from public agencies and nonprofit organizations for grants for projects that address climate change and maximize public benefits. The purpose of the Climate Ready program is to encourage local governments and non-governmental organizations to prepare for a changing climate by advancing planning and implementation of on-the-ground actions that reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and lessen the impacts of climate change on California's coastal communities and natural resources. What makes this second round of Climate Ready grants particularly important is that all projects recommended for funding in this round constitute implementation of on-the-ground adaptation to climate change, rather than research or planning. This second Climate Ready grant round for implementation projects specifically focused on:

- Sea level rise,
- Resiliency in agriculture, and
- Urban greening.

The Climate Ready grant solicitation was released on May 23, 2014 and was widely distributed (See Exhibit 2 Climate Ready Grant Announcement). Thirty-two project proposals requesting over \$9.7 million in Conservancy funding were submitted by the August 22, 2014 deadline.

Of the 32 proposed projects submitted, 11 are recommended for funding under this grant round, with an additional highly ranked proposal to be brought back to the board at a future meeting. In making its funding recommendation, staff considered each project's needs, its overall benefits, and the extent of competing demands for funds. Funding recommendations were made for projects that met one or more of the following Climate Ready Programmatic Priorities (adapted

in part from climate-smart principles developed by the [National Wildlife Federation Climate Change Adaptation Principles, 2011](#), [Resource Legacy Fund, 2012](#) and [Climate Smart Practices by Point Blue, 2013](#)).

1. Safeguard people and wildlife by using nature-based solutions that provide co-benefits for people, wildlife, and the economy.
2. Prioritize projects that maximize public benefits and avoid maladaptation.
3. Promote collaboration among various stakeholders and multiple sectors. Establish and expand non-traditional alliances to accelerate effective problem-solving between and among public and private resource managers, scientists, and decision-makers.
4. Incorporate the best available science by utilizing peer-reviewed and well-documented climate science, climate adaptation strategies, and management practices.
5. Focus on future climatic and ecological conditions rather than the past.
6. Design actions from a landscape, ecosystem, and watershed perspective on a regional scale.
7. Account for a high degree of uncertainty by developing and implementing strategies that provide the greatest benefits across a range of possible future climate scenarios.
8. Minimize energy use and greenhouse gas emissions. Enhance the ability of natural systems to sequester greenhouse gases.
9. Address the needs of low-income and other underserved populations that will be highly impacted by climate change.
10. Promote on-the-ground demonstration projects that implement innovative approaches or enhance understanding of effective management strategies and will potentially lead to broader change to policies, regulations, or to duplicating the effort elsewhere;
11. Incorporates a project-appropriate outreach or educational component.

The following is the list of projects proposed for funding under the Climate Ready program, including the project location; the name of the organization for the proposed project; the amount recommended for funding; and a brief project description.

NORTH COAST

Gold Ridge Resource Conservation District

\$218, 270

The Gold Ridge Resource Conservation District will work with Westview Jerseys Organic Dairy to construct a 1.4 million gallon pond with an associated barn roof rainwater catchment system and pumping infrastructure to eliminate one of the largest summer water diversions from Salmon Creek, a critical coastal watershed for endangered Coho salmon, thereby increasing resiliency in the face of increasingly unreliable rainfall patterns for both the agricultural operation and Salmon Creek organisms. Assessments of water quality and in-stream habitat in Salmon Creek have indicated that low summer stream flows, sediment delivery, and diminished channel complexity are the primary issues impairing ecological function of the estuary and its freshwater tributaries. The precipitous decline in the salmonid populations has all but decimated the local fishery, once a key local industry. Providing an off-stream water source to substantially reduce the need to draw water from Salmon Creek and its tributaries during low-flow conditions will enhance spawning and rearing habitat, restore the salmon population and prevent agriculture from

competing with a future viable fishing industry. The development, planning, and design of this project have been completed by funding previously provided in part through the first Climate Ready grant round in 2013.

SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA

Save the Bay

\$125,918

Save the Bay will restore 1.75 acres of transition zone habitat, narrow areas of vegetation located between Bay water and land, and will complete the acreage on an active transition zone restoration site within the Eden Landing Ecological Reserve, managed by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, for a total of 4.25 restored acres to increase species resilience to climate change impacts like sea level rise. Accelerated sea level rise will result in dramatic changes to San Francisco Bay tidal marshes over the next century, including widespread marsh loss due to inundation, higher floodwaters and changes in salinity regimes affecting the overall ecological function of tidal marshes. Transition zones are located at the upper edge of the tidal marsh along the gradient between the intertidal zone and the terrestrial environment and healthy, intact transition zones can provide accommodation space to allow tidal marshes to migrate inland as they become inundated and shift landward. Further, it has been shown that transition zones at the marsh interface can respond relatively quickly to sea level rise. Establishing transition zones adjacent to the South Bay Salt Pond Restoration project (SBSRP) can ensure that habitat is created and well-developed by the time the marsh establishes and will provide adaptive habitat to help ensure species resilience for a number of specialized plants and animals.

Alameda County Resource Conservation District

\$250,000

The Alameda County Resource Conservation District will implement climate-resilient management strategies, water-related Best Management Practices (BMPs), and an economically and ecologically sustainable grazing operation on 6,260 acres of land in the East Bay Regional Park District's Sunol Regional Wilderness in Alameda County to increase landowners' resiliency in the face of current and future drought, as well as other climate change impacts. The project is needed to resolve the urgent need for water storage and distribution as a comprehensive, proactive management strategy within the Project Area. The proposed BMPs focus on the installation, improvement, and/or reconstruction of livestock watering facilities, including springs and stock ponds, and will serve to support and enhance ecosystems, improve habitat for listed species, support biodiversity, and continue to support a viable grazing lease on the land. The landowners will also be better prepared to respond to current and future drought and proactively address uncertain future management scenarios caused by climate change.

The Watershed Project

\$202,206

The Watershed Project will transform a 4,380 sq. ft. section of parking lot and a 2,280 sq. ft. paved median located in the center of the parking lot at the Booker T. Anderson Jr. Park. into two vegetated bioswales and will sequester carbon through added native vegetation, mitigate the urban heat island effect through increased vegetation and the removal of asphalt, create an additional 1.32 acres of green space in the neighboring low-income Richmond community, increase wildlife habitat, and filter pollutants in runoff from the 1.2 acre parking lot via the new bioswales, thereby improving water quality in the adjacent Baxter Creek. The Baxter Creek watershed has been the focus of almost two decades of concentrated regional efforts to restore

each section of creek whenever feasible, and the creek on this site was restored in 2000-2001 with funding from the Conservancy and California Department of Water Resources. While the 2000-2001 project provided habitat and carbon sequestration, the creek's water quality continues to be degraded by runoff from the adjacent parking lot. In addition to improved water quality in Baxter Creek and mitigation such as carbon sequestration and a reduced urban heat island effect, the project will also reduce flooding issues in an urban park, helping provide increased resilience to rising sea levels and more frequent, intense storms and will demonstrate concepts that can be applied in upcoming projects now being planned throughout the watershed and in adjacent cities and counties.

Trust for Conservation Innovation

\$235,647

The Trust for Conservation Innovation will work with the California Rangeland Conservation Coalition to establish demonstration grassland restoration plots in Rush Ranch, Sears Point, and TomKat Ranch, working ranches that have a significant role in conserving coastal resources, and will document the restoration technique, inventory and monitor effects, and disseminate and demonstrate results to increase rangeland resilience to climate change impacts. Climate change models predict that climate impacts to Northern California will include longer dry spells, less precipitation, and more heat, resulting in a shorter growing season with severe economic impacts on forage production. Uncertainty in forage production can lead to excessive grazing to keep livestock productivity or result in conversion of rangelands to other uses. The main method of restoration has consisted of tillage and seeding, though adoption of this technology is limited by the high cost and risk. The resilience of California rangelands to climate change can be improved by increasing the native plant component, which in turn will increase the resilience of rangelands, and their capacity to provide ecosystem services. This project will demonstrate various techniques for grassland restoration, and then disseminate this information to practitioners to increase rangeland resilience in the face of predicted climate change impacts.

National Audubon Society, Inc.

\$200,000

National Audubon Society, Inc. will enhance drainage conditions and construct 10 acres of an innovative climate-smart transition zone, which is a narrow area of vegetation located between Bay water and land. National Audubon Society, Inc will also enhance 260 acres of vegetated, estuarine intertidal zone, a decreasing wetland type that consists of the area above water at low tide and under water at high tide. National Audubon Society, Inc. will conduct this project in the fringing tidal marsh along the western bank of Sonoma Creek in Sonoma County to increase regional resilience to climate change impacts like sea level rise. This marsh routinely ponds water for long periods following spring tides and storm events when high waters inundate the entire marsh and become trapped in a large topographic basin in the marsh interior. The ponded water in these problem areas leads to high mosquito production rates and unfavorable conditions for marsh productivity. Combined with severe lack of high tide refugia, there is very poor quality habitat for endangered and listed species living in the marsh. The transition zone will protect adjacent private lands from flooding, storm events, and sea-level rise, and will provide critically important refugia habitat for endangered species, while piloting essential climate-smart features of wetland enhancement projects.

CENTRAL COAST

Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County

\$200,000

The Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County will accelerate the adoption of on-farm conservation practices in the coastal Pajaro Valley to improve climate change resiliency in agriculture while piloting the development of tools that will assist growers in understanding the risks of climate change to their operations. Agriculture in California is highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, including changes in water quality and availability, extreme weather events such as drought and flooding, and increased risks from weeds, pests, and disease. The Pajaro Valley, located in southern Santa Cruz and northern Monterey Counties, has the highest per acre production value in the state and supports an \$895 million dollar agricultural industry. The project will be a pilot to promote on-farm conservation practices that will reduce the demand on groundwater supplies, retain soil on farms during storms and improve soil health through working directly with growers to conduct site-specific assessments, provide technical assistance to implement climate change resiliency practices, and promote the broader transfer of technology and lessons learned from the project to growers, partners, and policy makers. The project will enhance the resiliency of coastal communities and ecosystems to the impacts of climate change while enhancing coastal working lands.

Coastal San Luis Resource Conservation District

\$308,309

The Coastal San Luis Resource Conservation District will demonstrate a variety of effective rangeland best management practices to cope with climate change at the ranch scale that will buffer against climate change impacts and help maintain viability in weather events. The project will include the development of an Agriculture Ambassadors approach with the Cattlemen's and Cattlewomen's Associations to support adoption by other agriculture operators and will include field tours, statewide presentations and other strategies to encourage adoption and modeling. California coastal watersheds are predicted to have wet seasons that are wetter and dry seasons that are drier. In drier conditions, during the current drought for example, ranch operations struggle both with substantially reduced forage production and reduced drinking water availability for livestock. Proposed practices will buffer against climate change impacts and help maintain the viability of the agricultural operation in the face of reduced water supply, increasing temperatures, and greater variability in weather events. Best management practices will include: rangeland soil building, targeted high-density and low duration grazing, sediment capture, wetland enhancement, and streambank stabilization. While these measures will be implemented to primarily increase agricultural resilience to climate change, they have the additional benefits of reduced erosion, increased wetland and riparian habitat, and increased carbon sequestration on rangeland soils.

SOUTH COAST

County of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation

\$100,000

The County of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation will create a model climate adaptive park at Eugene A. Obregon Park, within a disadvantaged community in East L.A., to sequester greenhouse gases and mitigate the urban heat island effect, in addition to other benefits. There is a critical need to reduce impervious surfaces in East L.A., as heat island effects are exacerbated by the predominance of impervious surfaces on streets, parking lots, and

sidewalks, covering more than 60% of East L.A. The project will consist of creating a model green park by planting native, drought-tolerant trees, creating a demonstration garden, constructing two bio-retention basins and vegetated swales, installing a rain barrel, replacing turf with native plants and water-efficient grass, developing hydro zones, and replacing the approximately 30,000 square foot dark asphalt parking lot with permeable pavement. The project will manage stormwater, mitigate the urban heat island effect, conserve water, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions, as well as provide environmental education and promote sustainable and healthy lifestyles for the community.

Trust for Public Land

\$200,000

The Trust for Public Land will pilot a highly replicable demonstration of multi-benefit vegetative infrastructure in an existing 10,500 square foot alleyway in a low-income, urban community in South Los Angeles to sequester carbon and mitigate the urban heat island effect, in addition to other benefits. The project will transform an underutilized alley into a walkable, safe, “green alley” featuring innovative stormwater capture which will reduce greenhouse gas emissions, reduce pollutant loads to nearby waters, including a tributary of the L.A. River, increase infiltration, improve public health, and increase community awareness of climate change. The project is located in the central portion of the L.A. River Watershed and surface flows travel from the site to Compton Creek which connects with Reach 2 of the Los Angeles River. Dense urban portions of L.A. are projected to experience a 4–4.5 degree Fahrenheit temperature increase by 2040–2060. The project will implement several BMPs to slow, infiltrate, and retain stormwater onsite, capturing runoff from the intersecting streets with 2 catch basin intercepts, replacing asphalt with up to 1,000 square feet of permeable surfaces, percolating 20,000 gallons of stormwater, and providing at least 2,000 cubic feet of underground storage. The City of L.A. has over 900 linear miles of currently underutilized alleys, which, in their existing condition, exacerbate the effects of climate change. The quantity of alleys in L.A. provides a tremendous opportunity to harness these spaces to capture stormwater, improve air quality, and mitigate for the heat-island effect caused by paved surfaces, while improving the quality of life for underserved communities in the creation of beautiful, useable spaces. This project will provide a model for similar projects in the L.A. area.

From Lot to Spot

\$205,939

From Lot to Spot will engage the community in restoring 54,000 sq. ft. along the Dominguez Creek by planting a dense 60-tree urban canopy and restoring riparian habitat with over 1,500 native plants, utilizing recycled water and restoring the bike path accessible to the disadvantaged communities of Hawthorne, Inglewood and Gardena to sequester carbon and reduce the urban heat island effect, in addition to other benefits. High school students, with tree planting help from the L.A. Conservation Corps, will be involved in the design, community engagement, maintenance and monitoring aspects of the project. This multi-benefit project will not only sequester carbon, but includes stormwater catchment, urban heat island effect reduction, bicycle transportation advocacy, recreation and urban habitat restoration.

ADDITIONAL HIGHLY RANKED PROJECT

The following project proposal was submitted in response to the Climate Ready Grant Round 2 call for proposals, and was highly ranked by staff, in addition to the 11 projects listed above.

However, the lead agency has not completed CEQA analysis. It is anticipated that the project will return to the board at the March 26, 2015 meeting for approval as a consent item once CEQA analysis has been completed. Thus, the following project proposal is included in this Staff Recommendation since it is to be considered a Climate Ready project, and to preface the return of this project to the board as a consent item at the March 26, 2015 Conservancy board meeting.

Sonoma Resource Conservation District

\$215,000

The Sonoma Resource Conservation District will leverage existing funding to implement an off-channel irrigation pond on a privately owned agriculture parcel in the city of Healdsburg in Sonoma County to increase stream and agriculture resiliency in the face of unpredictable current and future drought conditions. Climate change models project that there will be a steady increase in annual evapotranspiration, heightened variability in precipitation, runoff and groundwater recharge, which will lead to increasing demand on surface and groundwater supplies for water for irrigation. The proposed project will entail working with the grape grower/landowner to dedicate 100% of the water currently used for vineyard irrigation back to the stream, while the landowner will pull from the off-channel irrigation pond for vineyard irrigation, which will be filled primarily by pumping from the current groundwater wells during the winter period of December through March. The project will thus change the timing of pumping for irrigation from the dry season to the rainy season, improving streamflow conditions in the summer months.

SITE DESCRIPTION: All of the projects serve a coastal region, or coastal watersheds, of the state and/or are within one of more of the nine counties under the jurisdiction of the San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy Program. See Exhibit 1 for regional maps depicting the locations of the projects.

PROJECT HISTORY:

Since the passage of the Global Warming Solutions Act (AB32) in 2006, the State of California has continued to implement actions to drive down greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and is on course to achieve the AB 32 emissions reduction goals for 2020 ([Climate Change Scoping Plan Update, 2013](#)). Emissions worldwide continue to rise dramatically and impacts from a changing climate are already being documented. In recent decades, California has experienced the impacts of a changing climate with higher winter and spring temperatures and an earlier melting snowpack. Along the state's coastline the sea level has been rising. At the Golden Gate Bridge sea level has risen by at least 7 inches over the past century. Ocean currents have shifted and resulted in altered food chains, and warmer temperatures have caused shifts in the distribution of plants and animals to higher elevations and to cooler northward slopes and ranges.

Over the next century the California coastal region will experience more severe impacts from the combined effects of higher air and water temperatures, altered precipitation patterns, sea-level rise, salinity changes, ocean acidification, more severe El Niño climate events, increased storm frequency and intensity, higher coastal erosion rates, saltwater intrusion, and greater fire intensity and frequency. These impacts will in turn increase vulnerabilities of our coastal infrastructure, public health and safety, and our natural resources which support our economy and a vast number of other services.

Recent study findings show that the climate-related choices we make today and in coming years can have a profound impact on future conditions ([California Energy Commission Reports on the Third Assessment](#)). Over the next decade, decisions made about where new development is located and where open space is preserved will affect our ability to protect buildings and humans from increased fire and flood hazards. Similarly, land use planning and acquisition now will determine whether or not there will be open space that supports migration corridors for plant and animal range shifts. Coastal marshes that are restored today will be more resilient as sea level rises, thereby maintaining the flood protection and ecological benefits they provide. Studies also indicate that building in early adaptation measures can result in overall lower cost ([The Bay Institute, 2013](#)). It is therefore urgent that we act now to protect our coastal communities and economy as well as our natural resources, public health, agricultural resources, and recreational amenities.

In recognition of the urgent need to help local governments, ports and non-governmental organizations prepare for a changing climate, SB 1066 (Lieu) was signed in 2012, giving the Conservancy explicit authority to assist others in addressing the impacts and potential impacts of climate change on resources within the Conservancy's jurisdiction. This legislation enables the Conservancy to award grants for projects that reduce GHG emissions or address extreme weather events, sea level rise, storm surge, beach and bluff erosion, salt water intrusion, flooding, and other hazards that threaten ports, harbors, coastal communities, infrastructure and natural resources. The Conservancy established its Climate Ready program to address the climate change impacts stated in SB 1066 and give priority to climate change projects that maximize public benefits.

In 2013, the Conservancy released its first Climate Ready call for proposals. For that first round of Climate Ready grants, 76 proposals were received, requesting over \$13.3 million in Conservancy funds. At the January 23, 2014 board meeting, 20 Climate Ready projects were funded under this first Climate Ready round, at approximately \$3 million, and largely consisted of climate-related planning projects.

The Conservancy released and widely-advertised the second Climate Ready call for proposals starting May 23, 2014. Given that the first Climate Ready grant round largely consisted of planning projects, this second Climate Ready grant round was focused specifically on only implementation projects related to sea level rise, agriculture, or urban greening. This round of proposals was due August 22, 2014 and the 32 proposal received were evaluated by the Conservancy staff. Twelve projects were highly ranked by staff, and eleven are being recommended for funding at this time. Over \$9.7 million in Conservancy funds were requested, indicating a significant need for funding for climate change focused projects. This recommendation is to fund eleven of the twelve highly ranked projects at approximately \$2,246,289, based on funding availability and prioritization of projects using the Conservancy's Climate Ready criteria.

PROJECT FINANCING

Coastal Conservancy

\$2,246,289

Others	\$5,895,660
Project Total	\$8,141,949

The proposed sources of Conservancy funds for this authorization are an appropriation to the Conservancy from Proposition 84, the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2006, as well as an appropriation to the Conservancy from Proposition 50, the Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Act of 2002.

Proposition 84 funds are allocated to the Conservancy for development, restoration and protection of land and water resources, and promotion of access to and enjoyment of coastal resources. See Public Resources Code Section 75060. All of the Climate Ready projects recommended for funding are consistent with these purposes. Furthermore, Proposition 84 funds may be expended by the Conservancy for any purpose consistent with its enabling legislation (see Public Resources Code Sections 75060(b) and 75074). For an explanation of how these projects meet this criterion, see the following section, Consistency with Conservancy's Enabling Legislation.

Proposition 84 requires that, for potential projects that include restoration for the purpose of natural resources protection, the Conservancy give priority to potential projects that meet one or more of the criteria specified in Section 75071. Three projects funded by this authorization involve restoration of land to restore natural resource functions.

The Save the Bay project is a restoration-based project located within the Eden Landing Ecological Reserve. Save the Bay will restore 1.75 acres of transition zone habitat, narrow areas of vegetation located between Bay water and land, as well as complete acreage on an active transition zone restoration site for a total of 4.25 restored acres. Save the Bay's work through this project will not only link transition zone habitat to existing protected areas within the Eden Landing Ecological Reserve, but will also result in sustainable combined acreage by completing acreage on a current transition zone. This work therefore satisfies section 75071 (a) regarding properties that link to, or contribute to linking, existing protected areas with other large blocks of protected habitat and serve to facilitate botanical transfer and result in sustainable combined acreage.

In addition, the National Audubon Society, Inc. project is a restoration based project located along the western bank of Sonoma Creek in Sonoma County. National Audubon Society, Inc., will construct 10 acres of an innovative climate-smart transition zone and enhance 260 acres of intertidal zone in the fringing tidal marsh along the western bank of Sonoma Creek. National Audubon Society, Inc.'s work through this project will enhance 260 acres of a decreasing wetland type, vegetated, estuarine intertidal zone, and therefore satisfies section 75071 (c) regarding properties that support relatively large areas of under-protected major habitats.

Lastly, the From Lot to Spot project is a restoration based project located along the Dominguez Creek in Los Angeles. From Lot to Spot will restore 54,000 sq. ft. along the Dominguez Creek by planting a dense 60 tree urban canopy and restoring riparian habitat with over 1,500 native plants. The project is consistent with section 75071 (e) which prioritizes projects for which there is a non-state matching contribution toward the restoration costs. Matching contributions can be either monetary or in the form of services, including volunteer services. The County of L.A. is

leveraging almost two times the Conservancy's monetary contribution to the completion of this project.

Proposition 50 funds are allocated to the Conservancy for the protection of coastal watersheds, not limited to acquisition, protection, and restoration of land and water resources, and associated planning, permitting, and administrative costs. See Water Code Section 79570. Climate Ready projects to be fully or partially funded by Proposition 50 are consistent with these purposes and include the following projects: the Sonoma Resource Conservation District project, the Trust for Conservation Innovation project, the Watershed Project's project, the Alameda County Resource Conservation District project, and the Save the Bay project.

The Sonoma Resource Conservation District project will dedicate 100% of the water currently used for vineyard irrigation back to a stream in the Grape Creek watershed that is connected to the greater Russian River Watershed to improve streamflow conditions.

The Trust for Conservation Innovation project will establish demonstration grassland restoration plots to increase rangeland resilience by increasing the native plant component and thus increasing the capacity of rangelands to provide for ecosystem services such as clean water, habitat, and biodiversity that promotes resistance to invasive plants.

The Watershed Project's project will create vegetated bioswales that will capture and filter pollutants in runoff from the parking lot at the Booker T. Anderson Jr. Park, thereby improving water quality in the adjacent Baxter Creek.

The Alameda County Resource Conservation District project will implement water-related Best Management Practices (BMPs) on 6,260 acres of land in the East Bay Regional Park District's Sunol Regional Wilderness in Alameda County which will serve to enhance water quality by reducing sedimentation from streambank erosion.

The Save the Bay project will restore 1.75 acres of transition zone habitat within the Eden Landing Ecological Reserve to provide accommodation space to allow the tidal marsh to migrate inland as they become inundated from sea level rise and shift landward, which will provide adaptive habitat to help ensure species resilience, to enable the wetland to continue to filter pollutants.

Additionally, each of the five projects listed above are consistent with the applicable adopted local watershed management plan and the applicable regional water quality control plan as detailed below in the "Consistency with Local Watershed Management Plan/State Water Quality Control Plan" section.

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S ENABLING LEGISLATION:

Nearly every type of project that the Conservancy supports will be affected by a changing climate. Many of the Conservancy's projects result in the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by protecting natural lands that capture carbon, and restoring wetlands which increases carbon sequestration. Therefore, due to the multi-objective nature of the Climate Ready grant, projects seeking approval for funding under this grant round are often consistent with both Section 31113 and other parts of Division 21.

Chapter 3: Establishment and Functions (includes Climate Change)

The projects listed below would be undertaken pursuant to Section 31111 of Chapter 3 of Division 21 of the Public Resources Code, which authorizes the Conservancy to fund and undertake plans and feasibility studies, and to award grants to public agencies and nonprofit organizations for these purposes:

- Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County;
- Coastal San Luis Resource Conservation District; and
- Trust for Conservation Innovation.

All of the projects recommended for Climate Ready funding would be undertaken pursuant to Section 31113 of Chapter 3 of Division 21 of the Public Resources Code, regarding the impacts and potential impacts of climate change on resources within the Conservancy's jurisdiction. Pursuant to Section 31113 (b), the Conservancy is authorized to award grants to nonprofit organizations and public agencies to undertake projects that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, address extreme weather events, sea level rise, storm surge, beach and bluff erosion, salt water intrusion, flooding, and other coastal hazards that threaten coastal communities, infrastructure, and natural resources. Consistent with this section, the proposed authorization would award grants to nonprofit organizations and public agencies to undertake the projects described in the "Project Summary" section, which maximize public benefit by reducing greenhouse gas emissions, enhancing coastal wetlands and natural lands, reducing coastal hazards due to sea level rise, and conserving biodiversity.

Chapter 4.5: San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy Program

The projects listed below would also be undertaken pursuant to Chapter 4.5 of Division 21 of the Public Resources Code, Sections 31160-31165, regarding recreational and resource goals in the San Francisco Bay Area:

- Save the Bay: Sections 31162(b), 31162(c), 31162(d), 31163(c), and 31165;
- Alameda County Resource Conservation District: Sections 31162(b), 31163(c), and 31165;
- The Watershed Project: Sections 31162(b), 31162(d), 31163(c), and 31165;
- Trust for Conservation Innovation: Sections 31162(b), 31163(c), and 31165;
- National Audubon Society, Inc.: Sections 31162(b), 31162(c), 31162(d), 31163(c), and 31165.

Pursuant to Section 31162, the Conservancy is authorized to award grants to projects located in the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area which will help achieve the following goals:

- to protect, restore, and enhance natural habitats and connecting corridors, watersheds, scenic areas, and other open-space resources of regional importance, (31162(b));
- to assist in the implementation of policies and programs of the California Coastal Act, the San Francisco Bay Plan, and the adopted plans of local governments and special districts, (31162(c)); and
- to promote, assist, and enhance projects that provide open space and natural areas that are accessible to urban populations for recreational and educational purposes, (31162(d)).

In addition, the five projects listed above would satisfy the criteria for determining project priorities under Section 31163(c) in that:

1. The projects are consistent with approved plans including: The Bay Conservation and Development Commission *San Francisco Bay Plan* (amended October 2011); The San Francisco Bay Joint Venture *Restoring the Estuary: Implementation Strategy of the San Francisco Bay Joint Venture* (January 2001); The San Francisco Estuary Partnership (SFEP)'s *Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan* (revised 2007); The San Francisco Bay Area Wetlands Ecosystem Goals Project *Baylands Ecosystem Habitat Goals Report* (1999); The USFWS *Draft Recovery Plan for Tidal Marsh Ecosystems of Northern and Central California* (2010); The USFWS *San Pablo Bay National Wildlife Refuge Comprehensive Conservation Plan* (2011); BCDC's *Living with a Rising Bay: Vulnerability and Adaptation in San Francisco Bay and on its Shoreline* (2011); The East Alameda County Conservation Strategy (2010); The City of Richmond's *Parks and Landscaping Plan* (2012); Contra Costa County's *Stormwater C.3 Guidebook – Stormwater Quality Requirements for Development Applications* (February 15, 2012); The Baxter Creek *Maintenance and Management Plan* (2010); and numerous SFPUC and EBRPD developed watershed, stewardship, and monitoring plans for the properties they own.
2. The projects serve a regional constituency by enhancing flood protection and wetland resiliency along the San Francisco Bay shoreline, improving water quality in Baxter Creek and thus the San Francisco Bay, and increasing the resiliency of Bay Area rangelands;
3. The projects can be implemented in a timely way and are prepared to begin work upon project approval;
4. The improvement of shoreline, rangeland, and urban park resilience to climate change that the projects provide, notably the restoration and creation of wetland transition zone along the San Francisco Bay, provides opportunities for benefits that could be lost if the projects are not quickly implemented; and
5. Four of the five projects include significant matching funds from the applicants.

Pursuant to Section 31165, the Conservancy is authorized to award grants for activities that are compatible with the preservation, restoration, or enhancement of ocean, coastal, bay, or watershed resources, or that facilitate environmental education related to these resources.

The proposed authorization would award grants for the projects listed above as further described in the "Project Summary" section, all of which are consistent with Sections 31162(b), 31162(c), 31162(d), 31163 and/or 31165.

Chapter 5.5: Integrated Coastal and Marine Resource Protection

The projects listed below would also be undertaken pursuant to Chapter 5.5 of Division 21 of the Public Resource Code, Section 31220, regarding grants for coastal watershed and coastal and marine habitat water quality, sediment management, and living marine resources protection and restoration projects. As required by Section 31220 staff has notified the State Water Resources Control Board of the nature of these projects and provided the opportunity for comment, input and review.

- Sonoma Resource Conservation District: 31220(b)(2), 31220 (b)(3), 31220(b)(4), and 31220(b)(7);
- Gold Ridge Resource Conservation District: Sections 31220(b)(1), 31220(b)(2), 31220(b)(3) and 31220(b)(7);
- Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County: Sections 31220(b)(1), 31220(b)(4), and 31220(b)(7);
- Coastal San Luis Resource Conservation District: Section 31220(b)(1), 31220(b)(2), 31220(b)(3), 31220(b)(4), 31220(b)(6), 31220(b)(7);
- County of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation: Sections 31220(b)(1) and 31220(b)(7);
- Trust for Public Land: Sections 31220(b)(1) and 31220(b)(7);
- From Lot to Spot: Sections 31220(b)(1) and 31220(b)(7).

Pursuant to Section 31220(b)(1), the Conservancy is authorized to undertake a project or award a grant for a project that reduces contamination of water within the coastal zone or marine waters.

Pursuant to Section 31220(b)(2), the Conservancy is authorized to undertake a project or award a grant for a project that protects or restores fish and wildlife habitat within coastal and marine waters and coastal watersheds, including, but not limited to, permit coordination projects for watershed restoration.

Pursuant to Section 31220(b)(3), the Conservancy is authorized to undertake a project or award a grant for a project that reduces threats to coastal and marine fish and wildlife.

Pursuant to Section 31220(b)(4), the Conservancy is authorized to undertake a project or award a grant for a project that reduces unnatural erosion and sedimentation of coastal watersheds or contributes to the reestablishment of natural erosion and sediment cycles.

Pursuant to Section 31220(b)(7), the Conservancy is authorized to undertake a project or award a grant for a project that reduces the impact of population and economic pressures on coastal and marine resources.

As Section 31220(c) requires, the proposed projects are consistent with local and state watershed plans. This is discussed in detail below under “Consistency With Local Watershed Management Plan/State Water Quality Control Plan.” Pursuant to Section 31220(c) all the projects included under this section have a monitoring and evaluation component.

Consistent with this section, the proposed authorization would award grants to nonprofit organizations and public agencies to undertake the projects listed above and described in the “Project Summary” section.

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY’S 2013 STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL(S) & OBJECTIVE(S):

The 12 projects described in the “Project Summary” section assist the Conservancy with meeting a number of its 2013-2018 Strategic Plan Goals and Objectives. Relevant Goals and Objectives are listed below, along with the names of the projects that meet each goal.

Public Access Goals

Consistent with **Goal 3 Objective 3B**, which seeks to implement waterfront revitalization projects that increase accessibility, create more inclusive access opportunities, support commercial and recreational fishing, encourage economic revitalization, promote excellence and innovation in urban design, enhance cultural and historic resources and that are resilient in a changing climate:

- Save the Bay
- National Audubon Society, Inc.

Coastal Resources Conservation Goals

Consistent with **Goal 4, Objective 4C**, which seeks to implement projects that preserve and restore fish and wildlife corridors between core habitat areas along the coast and from coastal to inland habitat areas:

- Sonoma Resource Conservation District
- Gold Ridge Resource Conservation District

Consistent with **Goal 5, Objective 5B**, which seeks to restore or enhance coastal habitats, including coastal wetlands and intertidal areas, stream corridors, dunes, coastal sage scrub, coastal terraces, forests and coastal prairie:

- Save the Bay
- National Audubon Society, Inc.

Consistent with **Goal 5, Objective 5E**, which seeks to implement projects to improve fish habitat including projects to remove barriers to fish passage, ensure sufficient instream flow, and provide in stream habitat and favorable water temperatures:

- Sonoma Resource Conservation District
- Gold Ridge Resource Conservation District

Consistent with **Goal 5, Objective 5G**, which seeks to implement projects to improve water quality to benefit coastal and ocean resources:

- The Watershed Project
- County of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation
- Trust for Public Land

Consistent with **Goal 6, Objective 6B**, which seeks to implement projects that foster the long-term viability of coastal working lands, including projects to assist farmers, ranchers, and timber producers to reduce impacts of their operations on wildlife habitat and water quality:

- Sonoma Resource Conservation District
- Gold Ridge Resource Conservation District
- Alameda County Resource Conservation District
- Trust for Conservation Innovation

- Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County
- Coastal San Luis Resource Conservation District

Consistent with **Goal 7, Objective 7D**, which seeks to implement adaptation pilot projects that reduce hazards from sea level rise and extreme storm events, and which protect natural resources and maximize public benefits:

- Save the Bay
- The Watershed Project
- National Audubon Society, Inc.

Consistent with **Goal 7, Objective 7E**, which seeks to implement adaptation pilot projects that address climate change impacts to uplands natural resources, biodiversity and critical habitat:

- Save the Bay
- National Audubon Society, Inc.
- From Lot to Spot

Consistent with **Goal 7, Objective 7F**, which seeks to implement projects that reduce greenhouse gases by increasing carbon sequestration, or by supporting land uses that reduce energy consumption including vehicle miles traveled:

- Sonoma Resource Conservation District
- Gold Ridge Resource Conservation District
- Save the Bay
- Alameda County Resource Conservation District
- The Watershed Project
- Trust for Conservation Innovation
- National Audubon Society, Inc.
- Coastal San Luis Resource Conservation District
- County of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation
- Trust for Public Land
- From Lot to Spot

Consistent with **Goal 7, Objective 7G**, which seeks to implement tree and vegetation planting projects that reduce urban heat island and provide other benefits such as reduced energy use, improved air quality, enhanced stormwater management, and improved quality of life:

- County of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation
- Trust for Public Land
- From Lot to Spot

Consistent with **Goal 8, Objective 8B**, which seeks to reduce conflicts in the coastal zone by implementing multi-benefit projects that accomplish multiple objectives and resolve longstanding conflicts:

- Sonoma Resource Conservation District
- Gold Ridge Resource Conservation District

Consistent with **Goal 9, Objective 9A**, which seeks to support programs and events that improve public understanding of coastal resources:

- The Watershed Project
- County of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation
- Trust for Public Land
- From Lot to Spot

Consistent with **Goal 9, Objective 9B**, which seeks to support the design and installation of interpretive or educational displays and exhibits related to coastal, watershed, and ocean-resource education maritime history and climate change:

- The Watershed Project
- County of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation
- Trust for Public Land

San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy Program Goals

Consistent with **Goal 11, Objective 11D**, which seeks to enhance tidal wetlands, managed wetlands, seasonal wetlands, upland habitat, and subtidal habitat:

- Save the Bay
- National Audubon Society, Inc.

Consistent with **Goal 11, Objective 11F**, which seeks to enhance riparian and riverine habitat or other watershed functions and processes for the benefit of wildlife or water quality, including removal of barriers to fish passage or projects that ensure sufficient instream flow:

- The Watershed Project

Consistent with **Goal 11, Objective 11H**, which seeks to eradicate non-native invasive species that threaten important habitats in the San Francisco Bay Area:

- Save the Bay
- Trust for Conservation Innovation

Consistent with **Goal 13, Objective 13B**, which seeks to implement projects that assist farmers and ranchers to steward the natural resources on their lands:

- Alameda County Resource Conservation District
- Trust for Conservation Innovation

**CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S
PROJECT SELECTION CRITERIA & GUIDELINES:**

The proposed project is consistent with the Conservancy's Project Selection Criteria and Guidelines, last updated on October 2, 2014, in the following respects:

Required Criteria

1. **Promotion of the Conservancy's statutory programs and purposes:** See the "Consistency with Conservancy's Enabling Legislation" section above.
2. **Consistency with purposes of the funding source:** See the "Project Financing" section above.
3. **Promotion and implementation of state plans and policies** (specific plans and policies that are being considered or implemented)
 - a. Sonoma Resource Conservation District and Gold Ridge Resource Conservation District:
 - i. For both proposed projects, the goal of increasing water storage as a drought resiliency strategy for local agriculture is supported by the 2014 *Safeguarding California: Reducing Climate Risk* update to the 2009 *California Climate Adaptation Strategy* (California Natural Resources Agency) under the section 'Actions Needed to Safeguard Agriculture,' which promotes management strategies that reduce climate risks to water including enhanced flood management, water use efficiency, and regional groundwater management for drought resiliency (p.35).
 - ii. Both projects are also consistent with the January 2014 *California Water Action Plan* (California Natural Resources Agency) which seeks to "manage and prepare for dry periods (small scale tanks or impoundments to reduce extraction from streams during low flows," as well as to "expand water storage capacity and improve groundwater management (increase groundwater recharge)," and
 - iii. The 2013 Draft of *California @ 50 Million: The Environmental Goals and Policy Report* (Governor's Office of Planning and Research) which seeks to "preserve agricultural lands and working landscapes to support the state's agriculture and forestry industries in the most sustainable manner."
 - b. Save the Bay and National Audubon Society, Inc.:
 - i. These project are consistent with the 2014 *Safeguarding California* update to the 2009 *California Climate Adaptation Strategy*, in the Biodiversity Sector, which states "conserve biodiversity, use of near-term strategy to protect and enhance habitat for long-term resilience, ecosystem enhancement to sustain and benefit wildlife and plants," since the project involves the restoration of wetland transition zone habitat, increasing the resiliency of this habitat type, in addition to the completion of acreage at a current site for a total of 4.25 restored acres of wetland transition zone.

- ii. These project are also consistent with the 2013 Draft of *California @ 50 Million: The Environmental Goals and Policy Report* which seeks to “promote the use of ‘green infrastructure’ to lessen environmental impacts of development and to provide protection from natural disturbances.”
- c. Alameda County Resource Conservation District and the Trust for Conservation Innovation
 - i. Both projects are consistent with the 2014 *Safeguarding California: Reducing Climate Risk* update to the 2009 *California Climate Adaptation Strategy*, as well as the *California’s Forests and Rangelands 2010 Assessment*, which both identify the value of continued grazing on rangelands throughout California as a tool to protect farmlands and support climate change resiliency.
 - ii. Both projects are also consistent with the 2013 Draft of *California @ 50 Million: The Environmental Goals and Policy Report* which seeks to “preserve agricultural lands and working landscapes to support the state’s agriculture and forestry industries in the most sustainable manner.”
- d. Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County:
 - i. This project is consistent with the 2014 *Safeguarding California: Reducing Climate Risk* update to the 2009 *California Climate Adaptation Strategy*, which describe the need for developing, supporting, maintaining, and publicizing climate risk visualization tools tailored more specifically to agricultural producers, and identifies the following actions that should be taken to improve agricultural resiliency to climate change in California, consistent with this project: 1) develop and adapt existing BMPs to reduce climate risks, including soil conservation practices, 2) develop incentive programs for sustainable, science-based practices that create resilience to climate impacts, including demonstration projects, and 3) enhance water use efficiency, flood management, and facilitate groundwater recharge for drought resiliency.
 - ii. This project is also consistent with the 2013 Draft of *California @ 50 Million: The Environmental Goals and Policy Report* which seeks to “preserve agricultural lands and working landscapes to support the state’s agriculture and forestry industries in the most sustainable manner.”
- e. Coastal San Luis Resource Conservation District:
 - i. This project is consistent with, and employs, several risk management strategies listed in the 2014 *Safeguarding California: Reducing Climate Risk* update to the 2009 *California Climate Adaptation Strategy*, including: soil conservation practices and building soil health, developing flood protection, reducing non-climate stressors such as farmland conversion, and implementing management practices to store carbon in soils.
 - ii. This project is also consistent with the 2013 Draft of *California @ 50 Million: The Environmental Goals and Policy Report* which seeks to “preserve

agricultural lands and working landscapes to support the state's agriculture and forestry industries in the most sustainable manner."

- f. The Watershed Project, County of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation, Trust for Public Land, and From Lot to Spot:
- i. These four projects are consistent with the 2014 *Safeguarding California: Reducing Climate Risk* update to the 2009 *California Climate Adaptation Strategy* which seeks to "support hazard mitigation by investing in green infrastructure and other protective structure to address sea level rise, managed shoreline retreat, stabilize river banks and restore and create wetlands, urban forestry and urban greening to address heat island effects, promote use of cool pavement to reduce urban heat island effects," (p. 70)., which supports the implementation of recommendations in the 2013 *Preparing CA for Extreme Heat Guidance* (p.289), and provides more natural floodplain features and functions that slow, spread, capture, and infiltrate floodwaters throughout a watershed (p.296).
 - ii. These projects are also consistent with the 2013 Draft *California @ 50 Million: The Environmental Goals and Policy Report* which seeks to "promote use of 'green infrastructure' to lessen environmental impacts of development and to provide protection from natural disturbances."
4. **Support of the public:** As indicated by the support letters provided in Exhibit 3, the suite of proposed projects are supported by elected officials, numerous community and nonprofit organizations, and local agencies.
5. **Location:** All of the 12 highly ranked projects are located either within the coastal zone, a coastal watershed, or the nine-county San Francisco Bay region.
6. **Need:** Without Conservancy funding, the proposed projects would either not proceed or would have to be scaled back.
7. **Greater-than-local interest:** The projects to be funded by this authorization will improve resiliency, public access, and recreation throughout the coastal regions of the state and the San Francisco Bay Area. Over the next century the California coastal region will experience more severe impacts from the combined effects of higher air and water temperatures, altered precipitation patterns, sea-level rise, salinity changes, ocean acidification, more severe El Niño climate events, increased storm frequency and intensity, higher coastal erosion rates, saltwater intrusion, and greater fire intensity and frequency. These impacts will in turn increase vulnerabilities of our coastal infrastructure, public health and safety, and our natural resources which support our economy and a vast number of other services.
8. **Sea level rise vulnerability:** Two of the twelve highly ranked Climate Ready projects address the impacts of sea-level rise directly as a project goal: Save the Bay and National Audubon Society, Inc. These impacts include more frequent and intense storms paired with rising sea-level will increase flooding, storm surge inundation, coastal erosion and shoreline retreat, and wetland loss, that will dramatically reshape California's coast and the San Francisco Bay. Funding the proposed projects takes a proactive step to protect our coastal communities and economy as well as our natural resources, public health, and recreational

amenities from the impacts of sea-level rise. Information about the vulnerability to sea level rise for the other ten projects is included below:

- a. Sonoma Resource Conservation District: This project is not close to a shoreline and would not be impacted by sea level rise.
- b. Gold Ridge Resource Conservation District: The project site is not expected to be affected by sea level rise, coastal erosion, or flooding.
- c. Alameda County Resource Conservation District: This project site is not vulnerable to projected impacts from sea level rise.
- d. The Watershed Project: This project site is 1/2 mile from San Francisco Bay, but is not expected to experience sea-water flooding. However, this project will capture large volumes of stormwater, which will help to protect low-income homes downstream of this site from flooding.
- e. Trust for Conservation Innovation: All project sites are higher than the expected sea level rise and in locations where storm surges are buffered by marshlands, with the exception of the Sears Point 2 project site, which is at sea level but protected by levees.
- f. Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County: This project will entail working with growers in the Pajaro Valley, including within coastal regions vulnerable to sea level rise. However, many of the practices to be implemented under this project are non-structural in nature, and as such are intended to move with the grower as he or she moves to different fields. The implementation of more structural practices will be focused in the upper portions of the watershed, which fall outside of projected sea level rise impacts.
- g. Coastal San Luis Resource Conservation District: This project is approximately 2 miles from Morro Bay and 1 mile from flood prone areas, and thus will not be affected by sea level rise.
- h. County of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation: This project site is not vulnerable to projected sea level rise impacts.
- i. Trust for Public Land: This project addresses flooding dangers, water contamination, and water supply crises resulting from sea level rise by reintroducing permeable surfaces to allow for water capture, infiltration, and reduction in flow velocities. Thus, not only is this project not vulnerable to sea level rise, but serves to help mitigate flooding and other impacts associated with sea level rise through the implementation of green and permeable infrastructure.
- j. From Lot to Spot: The project area is not located on the shoreline or adjacent, and not vulnerable to projected sea level rise impacts, however the project will be part of a larger system of climate change projects that are crucial in reducing impacts from storm water, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and mitigating future impacts of sea level rise.

Additional Criteria

9. **Urgency:** Over the next decade, decisions made about where new development is located and where open space is preserved will affect our ability to protect buildings and humans from increased fire and flood hazards. Similarly, land use planning and acquisition now will determine whether or not there will be open space that supports migration corridors for plant and animal range shifts. Coastal marshes that are restored today will be more resilient as sea level rises, thereby maintaining the flood protection and ecological benefits they provide. Studies also indicate that building in early adaptation measures can result in overall lower cost. It is therefore urgent that we act now to protect our coastal communities and economy as well as our natural resources, public health, agricultural resources, and recreational amenities.
10. **Leverage:** See the “Project Financing” section above.
11. **Conflict resolution:** Both the proposed Sonoma Resource Conservation District project and the proposed Gold Ridge Resource Conservation District project resolve competing water demands between agricultural and fish habitat uses by implementing water collection measures that provide the opportunity to divert 100% of water used for irrigation of agricultural lands.
12. **Readiness:** Eleven out of twelve of the projects described in the “Project Summary” section above are ready to implement and complete within one to two years. As explained in the “Project Summary” section above, one Climate Ready Round #2 project included in this staff recommendation, the Sonoma Resource Conservation District, will not be ready for the January 29, 2014 board meeting due to CEQA delays, and is anticipated to be brought before the board on the March 26, 2014 board meeting.
13. **Realization of prior Conservancy goals:** See “Project History” above.
14. **Return to Conservancy:** See the “Project Financing” section above.
15. **Cooperation:** The Climate Ready projects are intended to foster cooperation across multiple regional and political boundaries to address the impacts of climate change. To achieve this goal multiple nonprofit organizations and federal, state, and local agencies are involved in project implementation.
16. **Vulnerability from climate change impacts other than sea level rise:** All of the proposed projects are focused on climate change adaptation or mitigation, and their goal is to increase resilience of the project area to projected climate change impacts. All of the proposed projects have thus taken vulnerabilities from other climate change impacts, other than sea level rise, into consideration throughout the design of the project. Projects particularly strong in this aspect, which are not vulnerable to climate change impacts, include: Gold Ridge Resource Conservation District, Alameda County Resource Conservation District, The Watershed Project, Trust for Conservation Innovation, Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County, County of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation, and the Trust for Public Land.
17. **Minimization of greenhouse gas emissions:**
 - a. Sonoma Resource Conservation District: The project will employ Best Management Practices during construction to reduce emissions including: carpooling to the jobsite, use of low carbon fuels, use of equipment with more energy efficient engines and

- contracting with vendors in close proximity. Additionally, over 250 drought-tolerant native trees and shrubs will be installed and will act as a carbon sink, while the off-channel irrigation pond will provide carbon sequestration.
- b. Gold Ridge Resource Conservation District: While pond construction will result in greenhouse gas emissions in the short run, these will be offset by the increase resiliency of the operation's water supply, and thus reduced emissions associated with the delivery of drinking water and feed for the operators' herds. In the long run, on-site water supply will eliminate emissions associated with water or feed delivery.
 - c. Save the Bay: The project does not involve any construction, so measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions are minimal. Though, Save the Bay will follow Best Management Practices per the Conservancy's *Guidance for Addressing Climate Change*, which includes planning for efficiency in staff travel and the use of public transportation to sites.
 - d. Alameda County Resource Conservation District: The implementation of BMPs and enhancement activities may result in potential increases in emissions during this initial phases, but then little to no maintenance involving vehicle and equipment operation is anticipated for at least 10 years on each project component; therefore, there will be little to no additional GHG emissions after each component is implemented. Additionally, the project BMPs will improve the ability of grazing managers to implement practices that may sequester additional atmospheric carbon while enhancing other ecosystem services, such as soil stability and water infiltration.
 - e. Trust for Conservation Innovation : The project will work on 50% of the project area, which will over time benefit 100% of the project area, and thus result in 50% savings in all inputs necessary, including fuel, herbicide and seeds. Further, there will be a reduction in enteric methane emissions through the improvement of livestock diet quality and quantity represented by the additional strategic forage resource. Lastly, it is expected that restoration will result in sequestration of carbon into the soil as stable particulate organic matter over the long term.
 - f. National Audubon Society, Inc.: Contractors will employ all recommended avoidance and reduction measures as outlined by the Project's CEQA Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program and the construction specifications. Further, this project proposes to enhance functionality of a severely degraded wetland, which will increase the marsh's ability to become a carbon sink rather than a potential source for greenhouse gases.
 - g. Coastal San Luis Resource Conservation District: Construction of the project will result in greenhouse gas emissions over a short duration from a number of sources including construction and transportation. However, to reduce direct emissions the project will consider an analysis of emissions, reduction opportunities in material selection, and reducing vehicle miles traveled for daily project operations. Further, possible carbon sinks include the rangelands themselves as well as riparian areas.
 - h. County of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation: Though the construction of Phase II of the Green Park will result in the production of greenhouse gas emissions, Best Management Practices will be implemented to eliminate or reduce

sources of greenhouse gases. Further, to the extent possible, the project will employ locally-sourced or recycled materials for construction, and will maximize fuel efficiency during constructing by reducing unnecessary idling time and shutting off equipment when not in use.

- i. Trust for Public Land: Although greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions will be generated during the construction phase of this project, construction materials will be sourced locally and the project will result in a net benefit in GHG emissions since the project seeks to reduce transportation-related emissions through encouraging the development of underused alleys into new non-motorized transportation corridors, and will directly reduce GHG emissions through increasing tree canopy coverage within the alley and thus promoting carbon sequestration.

CONSISTENCY WITH SAN FRANCISCO BAY PLAN:

The following proposed projects are being undertaken pursuant to Chapter 4.5 of Division 21 of the Public Resources Code, are within the jurisdiction of BCDC, and are consistent with the policies of BCDC's San Francisco Bay Plan (Bay Plan) as discussed below: Save the Bay, The Alameda County Resource Conservation District, The Watershed Project, Trust for Conservation Innovation, and The National Audubon Society, Inc.

The proposed projects are consistent with Part IV, Climate Change policies, because they will address the resilience of the project areas to climate change and the capacity of the project areas to adapt to climate change impacts like sea level rise, increased temperatures in urban areas, and decreased precipitation. Specifically, these projects will implement projects to enhance or create wetland transition zones to increase the resilience of wetlands around the San Francisco Bay and protect adjacent communities from flooding due to current flooding issues and projected sea level rise, implement climate-resilient management strategies and Best Management Practices and establish demonstration grassland restoration plots to increase the resilience of agricultural lands and rangelands, and transform paved areas into permeable surfaces while increasing green space in urban areas to promote water conservation, groundwater recharge, and reduced urban heat island effect.

The proposed project by The Watershed Project is consistent with Part III, Water Quality policies, because the installation of bioswales at Booker T Anderson Jr. Park in Richmond will filter pollutants in runoff from the 1.2 acre parking lot before it enters the adjacent Baxter Creek, and shortly thereafter empties into the San Francisco Bay in Richmond.

The proposed Save the Bay and National Audubon Society, Inc. projects are consistent with Part IV, Shoreline Protection since both projects involve wetland restoration in wetlands that will serve to protect adjacent communities from both current and future flooding issues associated with sea level rise.

CONSISTENCY WITH LOCAL WATERSHED MANAGEMENT PLAN/ STATE WATER QUALITY CONTROL PLAN:

Projects undertaken pursuant to PRC Section 31220 must be consistent with the following, if available and relevant: Integrated Watershed Resource Management Programs; local watershed

management plans; and water quality control plans adopted by the state and regional water boards.

Sonoma Resource Conservation District

The project is consistent with the *Grape Creek Streamflow Improvement Plan* which specifically recommends shifting diversions from summer to winter to result in more streamflow during summer, which is exactly the activity proposed by this project (2013, p.46).

Gold Ridge Resource Conservation District

The project was specifically identified and prioritized during the development of the *Salmon Creek Integrated Coastal Watershed Management Plan* (GRRCD, PCI, 2010), funded in part by the Conservancy. In addition, the project's primary goal of restoring stream flow is consistent with the National Marine Fisheries Service *Coho Recovery Plan* (2012), and the Department of Fish and Wildlife's *Recovery Strategy for California Coho Salmon* (2004).

Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County

This project is consistent with many watershed management plans including the goals listed in the 2007 *Pajaro River Watershed Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) Plan*, and the *Santa Cruz County IRWM Plan*, updated in 2014, which include: 1) provide safe, reliable water supply to meet current and expected regional demand without causing undesirable environmental impacts, 2) maintain and improve regional surface and groundwater quality to protect beneficial uses, and 3) manage stormwater runoff through economic projects that enhance natural hydrologic function and protect communities. Additionally, the project is consistent with the 2013 *Pinto Lake Watershed: Implementation Strategies for Restoring Water Quality in Pinto Lake*, which recommends a number of management measures to reduce nutrient loading, including erosion control/sediment capture practices, as well as irrigation and nutrient management programs on agricultural lands. Further, the project is consistent with AMBAG's 1999 *Pajaro River Watershed Water Quality Management Plan*, the 2002 *Lower Pajaro Enhancement Plan*, and the *Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary's Water Quality Protection Program Action Plan IV: Agriculture and Rural Lands*, which all address the critical need for agricultural community involvement in watershed protection and enhancement, highlight the need for landowner outreach, technical assistance, and cost-share funding to implement erosion control and water quality projects, and advise a multifaceted approach to water quality protection, including technical training, education and outreach, as well as the establishment of demonstration projects for water quality improvement. The project is also consistent with the 2014 *Pajaro Valley Basin Management Plan*, which identifies strategies for bringing the Pajaro groundwater basin into balance, including improving water use efficiency on farms to reduce demand on limited groundwater supplies. The BMP sets a water conservation target of 5000 acre-feet per year.

Coastal San Luis Resource Conservation District

This project is consistent with the 2014 *San Luis Obispo County Watersheds Management Plan: Phase I – Vision, Framework & Methodology Development*, which outlines primary issues in the Morro Bay Watershed, within which the project site is located, as: accelerated sedimentation, elevated nutrient levels including those from rangeland runoff, scarce freshwater resources and preserving biodiversity. The project will demonstrate rangeland Best Management Practices (BMPs) including: rangeland soil building, targeted high-density and low duration grazing,

sediment capture, wetland enhancement, and streambank stabilization with the primary goal of increasing agricultural resilience to climate change. BMPs have the additional benefits of reduced erosion, increased wetland and riparian habitat, and increased carbon sequestration on rangeland soils.

County of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation

This project, and the entire Green Park including Phase II for the permeable paving aspect of the project, is consistent with the Greater Los Angeles County Integrated Regional Water Management Plan, which provides a vision of sustainable management of water resources in the Greater Los Angeles County region for the next 20 years and specifically details a multi-benefit approach to achieving quantitative targets for sustainable water supplies including: reduced dependence on imported water supplies, cleanup of local groundwater and stormwater, in-stream water quality habitat, habitat improvement and additional parks and open space particularly in disadvantaged communities. The project, development of the Green Park including Phase II of the project, will improve water quality, promote water conservation and ground water recharge, remove water-intensive turf, and create a demonstration garden.

Trust for Public Land

This project is consistent with the *Basin Plan* for the Coastal Watersheds of L.A. and Ventura Counties since the project is capable of contributing to long-term water quality benefits. Further, the project is also consistent with the *L.A. County Integrated Regional Water Management Plan* in that it supports the plan's objectives of: 1) increasing watershed friendly recreational open space; 2) complying with water quality standards by improving the quality of urban runoff, stormwater, and wastewater, and protecting groundwater and drinking water quality; 3) protecting, restoring, and enhancing natural processes and habitats through restoring pre-development natural hydrology; 4) optimizing local water resources to reduce reliance on imported water; and 5) maintaining and enhancing public infrastructure related to flood protection and water quality.

From Lot to Spot

This project is consistent with the County of Los Angeles Dominguez Watershed Master Plan, specifically: 4.6.2.1 Conduct public awareness campaign for the Dominguez Watershed; 4.6.3.2 Involve public in watershed cleanup days; and 4.6.3.4 Create watershed enhanced recreational/bike trail along Dominguez Creek.

Additional Projects Funded under Proposition 50

Projects funded partially or fully by Proposition 50 funds must be consistent with the applicable adopted local watershed management plan and the applicable regional water quality control plan. Thus, watershed protection activities included in each of the four projects listed below, located in the San Francisco Bay Area, are consistent with the Water Quality Control Plan (Basin Plan) for the San Francisco Bay Basin since watershed protection activities included in each of the four projects below serve to improve water quality. Specifically, the Trust for Conservation Innovation project improves water quality by increasing the capacity of rangelands to provide for ecosystem services that promote clean water; the Watershed Project's project filters pollutants in runoff from a parking lot before surface waters flow into the nearby Baxter Creek; the Alameda County Resource Conservation District project will improve water quality by reducing sedimentation from streambank erosion; and the Save the Bay project restores transition zone

habitat within the Eden Landing Ecological Reserve to promote resilience of the tidal marsh and enable the wetland to continue to filter pollutants thereby improving water quality.

COMPLIANCE WITH CEQA:

Categorical Exemptions

Gold Ridge Resource Conservation District

The proposed project is categorically exempt from review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to 14 California Code of Regulations Section 15304, minor alterations to land, because the project involves the renovation of an existing manure pond for roof rainwater catchment and will entail some additional excavation and grading around the existing pond, though with a slope of less than 10 percent. Additionally, the work area is within a high-use dairy facility with no existing vegetation or wildlife habitat value, and isn't near a stream channel. Construction will occur during the summer months to avoid site erosion, and which will also avoid impacts to nesting swallows, barn owls, or other nesting birds which may use the dairy buildings. Cultural resource and rare plant surveys have already been conducted on the site through the Department of Fish and Wildlife's Fisheries Restoration Grant Program, with no resources identified. Although there are no red-legged frogs known to now use the manure pond, since the project is within potential California red-legged frog habitat, a habitat assessment will be conducted, and if needed, pre-construction surveys and other avoidance approaches recommended by the Department will be utilized, to reduce or eliminate the potential for impacts.

Trust for Conservation Innovation

The proposed project is categorically exempt from review under CEQA pursuant to 14 California Code of Regulations Section 15304, minor alterations to land, because the project will consist of the establishment of demonstration grassland restoration plots in three working ranches, which will result in the improvement of these rangeland ranches by increasing the native plant component.

The Watershed Project

The proposed project is categorically exempt from review under CEQA pursuant to 14 California Code of Regulations Sections 15301 and 15304, existing facilities and minor alterations to land, because the project will modify an existing parking lot to include new bioswales to treat stormwater, grading will be minimal, and no mature trees will be removed, and thus the project consists of alteration of an existing public facility with negligible or no expansion of use beyond that existing at the time of the lead agency's determination and because it involves only minor public alterations in the condition of land and vegetation which do not involve removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees.

Save the Bay

The proposed project is categorically exempt from review under CEQA pursuant to 14 California Code of Regulations Section 15333, small habitat restoration projects, because the project would restore native plants to less than five acres of disturbed area, and there would be no significant adverse impacts to endangered, rare, or threatened species.

Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County

The proposed project is categorically exempt from review under CEQA pursuant to 14 California Code of Regulations Section 15301, existing facilities, because the project consists of the operation of existing private facilities. The project may result in more efficient use of water and soil within existing farm operations.

County of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation

The County of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation project is categorically exempt from review under the CEQA guidelines pursuant to 14 California Code of Regulations Sections 15303 and 15304(b). Section 15304 exempts projects which involve the minor alterations in the condition of land, water, and/or vegetation which does not involve removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees except for forestry or agricultural purposes. Examples of exempt projects provided by this section of the Guidelines include landscaping activities. The Eugene Obregon Park project fits the example provided by Section 15304(b) as a new landscaping project that will replace existing, conventional landscaping with water efficient landscaping. With respect to those elements of the project which involve the construction of a green roof shade structure in the parking lot and educational signage, these minor structures are exempt under Section 15303 which provides for construction and location of limited numbers of new, small facilities or accessory structures.

From Lot to Spot

The From Lot to Spot project is categorically exempt from review under the CEQA guidelines pursuant to 14 California Code of Regulations Section 15301(c) and (f), which exempts projects which involve the minor alteration of existing public structures, facilities or topographical features, involving negligible or no expansion of use beyond that existing at the time of review. Examples of these kinds of projects include: 1) alteration of streets, sidewalks, gutters, bicycle and pedestrian trails, and similar facilities and 2) the addition of safety or health protection devices in conjunction with existing structures, facilities, or topographical features. This project will retrofit an existing bike path and river bank to make them better address storm water run-off and reduce heat island effects from the previously impervious surfaces by restoring 54,000 sq. ft. of the Dominguez Creek by planting 60 trees and over 1500 native plants. The project will provide additional amenities such as improvements to bicycle/pedestrian trail to enhance public safety and encourage non-motorized use of the area.

Trust for Public Land

The Trust for Public Land project is categorically exempt from review under the CEQA guidelines pursuant to 14 California Code of Regulations Section 15301(c) and (f), which exempts projects which involve the minor alteration of existing public structures, facilities or topographical features, involving negligible or no expansion of use beyond that existing at the time of review. Examples of these kinds of projects include: 1) alteration of streets, sidewalks, gutters, bicycle and pedestrian trails, and similar facilities and 2) the addition of safety or health protection devices in conjunction with existing structures, facilities, or topographical features. This project will retrofit an existing alleyways to make it better address storm water run-off and reduce heat island effects from the previously impervious surfaces by implementing several Best Management Practices to slow, infiltrate, and retain stormwater on site. The project will provide

additional amenities such as installation of interpretive signage, trash receptacles, benches, and striping.

Mitigated Negative Declarations

National Audubon Society, Inc.

The Sonoma Creek Enhancement Project with the National Audubon Society, Inc. has completed both CEQA and NEPA review by the appropriate regulatory agencies. The CEQA Notice of Determination was signed on May 15, 2014 by the lead agency, the San Francisco Regional Water Quality Control Board, which determined that the project will not have a significant effect on the environment. A mitigated negative declaration was prepared for this project pursuant to the provisions of CEQA, and mitigation measures were made a condition of the approval of the Mitigated Negative Declaration, as discussed in detail below.

The NEPA review has concluded with the lead agency, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) on the environment. The FONSI will be signed upon securing the Consistency Determination from the Bay Conservation and Development Commission (pending). All CEQA/NEPA documents pertaining to this project can be found in Exhibit 5.

In order to comply with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and to evaluate the potential environmental impacts of the proposed project, Audubon California prepared an Initial Study for the Sonoma Creek and a Mitigated Negative Declaration signed by the Regional Water Quality Control Board on May 15, 2014. The RWQCB also submitted a Notice of Determination stating the project would not have a significant effect on the environment.

The Initial Study identified potentially significant environmental impacts to some sensitive biological resources from construction of the proposed project alternatives. All of these potential impacts would be reduced to a less-than-significant level with the implementation of mitigation measures identified in the Initial Study and summarized below. With mitigation identified in the Initial Study, the proposed project would not significantly affect local waterways or cause a fish or wildlife species to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal, or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory.

Air Quality: Short-term construction-generated air pollutant impacts include the vehicle emissions and dust. However, these impacts would be reduced to a less-than-significant level by implementation of Basic Control Measures as recommended by the BAAQMD, which call for cleaning equipment, reducing idling times, and maintaining equipment among other measures (**Mitigation Measure III-1**).

Biological Resources: Several potential impacts were identified that would be reduced to a less-than-significant level by implementation of mitigation measures. Impacts to special status plant species would be avoided by **Mitigation Measure IV-1** which calls for a qualified botanist to survey, flag and mark for relocation any special-status plant species found on site. Similarly impacts to special-status bird species, such as Clapper Rails, would be avoided by

implementation of **Mitigation Measure IV-2** which calls for surveys and exclusion of construction in areas where rails are found. To reduce disturbance to marine mammals, **Mitigation Measure IV-3** calls for a qualified wildlife biologist to be present during the construction of tidal channels to avoid areas with harbor seals. And to avoid impacts to rodents, such as the Salt Marsh Harvest Mouse, **Mitigation Measure IV-4** calls for a qualified wildlife biologist to walk in front of construction equipment and flush rodents from the path of construction equipment. The Biological Resources section also discusses the conversion of approximately 2 acres of jurisdictional wetland and water habitat to “uplands” through the creation of an upland transition zone. While this is a loss of wetlands, this change is considered a beneficial impact to the project since it will improve habitat for several species of marsh-dependent wildlife by providing refugia during extreme high tides and storm events and by providing nesting/roosting habitat, as well as space for future sea-level rise. Creation of upland transition zones is consistent with regional plans, such as the USFWS Recovery Plan for Tidal Marsh Ecosystems of Northern and Central California (2013), since it improves overall marsh ecosystem structure and function and therefore, this conversion is considered less than significant.

Hydrology and Water Quality: Construction could potentially generate short-term impacts to water quality by increasing suspended sediment concentration and introducing contaminants into waters of the Bay. In addition, after earthmoving work, bare areas could be exposed to erosion. To reduce these impacts to a less-than-significant level **Mitigation Measure IX-1** calls for development and implementation of a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) that includes best management practices (BMPs) for minimizing stormwater runoff, erosion, and potential water quality impacts associated with construction activities. The EIS/R points out that there is likely to be some minor erosion of marsh features after construction, but not to an extent that would be considered detrimental to adjacent marsh habitats; furthermore, the creation of minor variations in habitat from some erosion is considered desirable.

The Conservancy staff has independently reviewed the MND for the proposed project and concurs with the RWQCB’s findings that the proposed project as mitigated does not have the potential for a significant effect on the environment. Staff therefore recommends that the Conservancy, as a responsible agency, find that there is no substantial evidence that the proposed project, with the identified measures to avoid or reduce the possible significant environmental effects, will have a significant effect on the environment. Upon approval, staff will file a Notice of Determination for the proposed project.

Alameda County Resource Conservation District

The proposed project will be covered under the *Final Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Alameda County Voluntary Local Program* (MND) adopted by the Alameda County Resource Conservation District Board of Supervisors on August 20, 2012. The MND programmatically covers all of the Best Management Practices included in this project, which are focused on the installation, improvement, and/or reconstruction of livestock watering facilities that would create a functioning network of water resources to allow the lessee and landowners to apply climate-resilient management strategies. The East Bay Regional Park District and the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission will enter into an agreement with the Alameda County Resource Conservation District to enroll in the Alameda County Voluntary Local Program (VLP). The

agreement provides inclusion for the projects under the Alameda County VLP and provides take compliance with the California Endangered Species Act and CEQA. The permitting of the project BMPs will not need to go through individual CEQA review because they are covered under the MND. CEQA documentation for this project, including a copy of the MND, can be found in Exhibit 4.

The MND addresses the impacts of the activities described in the Alameda County VLP, including pond restoration and livestock and wildlife water distribution. The MND indicates that the only potentially significant effects from implementation of the pond restoration activities proposed in this authorization are in the area of Biological Resources. Mitigation measures are identified in the MND to avoid, reduce or mitigate all of the potentially significant environmental effects on biological resources. The mitigation measures include: limiting construction hours; minimizing vegetation disturbance; avoiding plastic mono-filament matting; avoiding animal burrows; managing removed sediment; capping pipes, culverts and similar structures; using escape ramps; using native trees/shrubs; conducting cavity/tree nesting bird surveys and ground nesting bird surveys; conducting bat surveys; limiting in-stream restoration seasonally; appropriately locating and managing equipment staging and storage; dewatering activities; avoiding rock outcroppings; limiting use of herbicides; avoiding special-status plants; and complying with all applicable permit conditions. The mitigation measures also include particular measures for protecting several special-status species and their habitats (California red-legged frog, California tiger salamander, Alameda whipsnake, San Joaquin kit fox, Longhorn fairy shrimp and Vernal pool fairy shrimp, Callipe silverspot butterfly, and San Francisco dusky footed woodrat).

Staff has independently reviewed the MND and has determined that the proposed project is within the scope of the Alameda County VLP and is adequately described in the MND, and that there is no substantial evidence that the project, as mitigated, may have a significant effect on the environment. Staff will file a Notice of Determination upon approval of the project.

Coastal San Luis RCD

The Coastal San Luis Obispo Resource Conservation District's proposed project comprises two components: land and water management practices and stream restoration. The land and water management component is categorically exempt from CEQA under California Code of Regulations title 14, Section 15304, which exempts minor alterations of land or water that do not include the removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees. The land and water management practices entail modifications in how grazing land is managed to improve water quality and carbon sequestration. The modifications entail only minor alterations in the condition of land or water and will not remove any trees.

The stream restoration component is addressed in the *Mitigated Negative Declaration of the San Luis Obispo County Partners in Restoration Permit Coordination Program* adopted by co-lead agencies the Upper Salinas – Las Tablas Resource Conservation District and the Coastal San Luis Resource Conservation District on May 14, 2009 (the "MND"), attached to this staff recommendation as Exhibit 6.

The Permit Coordination Program ("Program") is a partnership between the Upper Salinas – Las Tablas Resource Conservation District, the Coastal San Luis Resource Conservation District and

the Natural Resource Conservation Service. The Program provides an efficient permitting process for accomplishing restoration work on private land. The program consists of 1) 18 NRCS conservation practices designed to improve critical water quality problems and enhance fish and wildlife habitat, 2) NRCS standardized planning tools, and 3) mitigation measures referred to in the Program as Environmental Protection Measures.

The stream restoration component of the proposed project consists of several Program practices, including streambank stabilization, critical areas planting, wetland enhancement and head cut repair and the related Environmental Protection Measures. The Environmental Protection Measures for these practices include carrying out work during the dry season (May through October) to avoid impacting red legged frog; initial site assessments by certified conservation planners; and field surveys by qualified individuals approved by permitting agencies. In addition to the general protection measures contained in the Project Description, all terms and conditions in the biological opinions issued by FWS and NMFS and conditions in the streambed alteration agreement issued by DFG related to state-listed species shall be implemented. The MND provides that implementation of the proposed stream restoration practices with the related Environmental Protection Measures will not have a significant effect on the environment.

As a responsible agency, the Conservancy staff has independently reviewed the MND (Exhibit 6), adopted jointly by the lead agencies. Staff recommends that the Conservancy find that the stream restoration component of the proposed project will not have a significant adverse effect on the environment.

Additional Highly-Ranked Project

Sonoma Resource Conservation District

As mentioned above in the “Project Summary” section, it is anticipated that the proposed Sonoma Resource Conservation District project will be brought back to the board on March 26, 2015 due to current CEQA delays that prevent the authorization of the project at this current January 29, 2015 board meeting. It is anticipated that the project will require a Mitigated Negative Declaration and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) will be the lead agency. The Sonoma Resource Conservation District submitted a funding proposal to DFW for partial funding of this project. If funded through the Fisheries Restoration Grant Program (FRGP), this project will fall under DFW’s programmatic permit.